

Testimony Regarding An Act Concerning Collateral

Consequences of a Criminal Record

Dear Co-Chair Senator Robyn Porter, Co-Chair Senator Julie Kushner, and Esteemed Members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee,

I am writing to ask you to support legislation that would put into law the proposed actions in the bill before the Labor and Public Employees Committee known as **An Act Concerning Collateral**

Consequences of a Criminal Record.

Paul is back in prison...not to say that he was ever really out of prison...In fact, Paul is just another perpetual prisoner, living out the bitter existence of perpetual prison that has been his lot since birth. Paul was born into poverty and cultivated into crime by sheer necessity. Ignorance, supported by a sub-standard education, which was subsidized by a social system built on a foundation of racism and greed offered Paul few options. Opportunities were few, so petty crimes became his course of choice. One such petty crime netted Paul less than \$300 dollars...his capture, prosecution and subsequent incarceration cost the state's taxpayers well over \$300,000. After his release from prison Paul joined the ranks of thousands of other perpetual prisoners aimlessly wandering the city streets, weighted down by the heavy chains of their perpetual prisons. Some dragging the weight of parole or probation behind them as they struggled to climb out of mire of mayhem that characterizes the slums they were sent back to after their release. Dragging the chains of judicial supervision that forces them to account for their failures and rehearse their shame weekly or monthly to one appointed bureaucrat or another. Hirelings paid to prevent perpetual prisoners, like Paul, from ever maturing into a responsible citizen in a society that had already rejected him and assigned him to a life of everlasting incarceration.

Paul had taken not one, but two part-time jobs, both paying less than minimum wage and offering no benefits from which he could entrust his future well-being to. He had even accepted the vermin infested housing, ruled over by the slum lord he saw only on the first Monday of every month. Paul reported on time, rendered clean urine specimens on demand and gave one third of his meager pay check to the parole officer and another one third to his ex-girlfriend for his court imposed child support payments. Paul could simply not survive on the remaining one third, so other alternatives needed to be explored. Paul had only ever been a petty thief, and not a good one at that. Desperation re-wrote the moral code he had only drafted in his mind during his many months in prison, and street crime was never a lucrative enterprise. Paul was easy prey for the beasts law enforcement was breeding, and was quickly carried in the maw of this monster to the lair of the judicial system. Seen only as a repeat offender, reenlisting in the criminal army of fools, he was quickly dispatched. The process will be repeated once again at the end of his new sentence, and the program of indefinite incarceration will continue for this perpetual prisoner unless WE THE PEOPLE resolve to make some changes.

Jehan Abdur-Raheem 3/1/2022